

CURRENT STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

In the Claims

1. (Currently amended) Method for the preparation of a meat substitute product which comprises protein, wherein:

- a) a protein material, a hydrocolloid which precipitates with metal cations and water are combined,
- b) the composition from step a) is formed into a homogenous mixture,
- c) the homogeneous mixture from b) is mixed with a solution of a metal cation with a valency of at least 2, in order to form a fibrous product,
- d) the fibrous product is isolated,

wherein the protein material comprises a milk protein material, and the homogeneous mixture of milk protein material, hydrocolloid which precipitates with metal cations, and water is formed in step b) in the presence of an amount of a calcium complex-forming agent.

2. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein a mixture of the protein material and water is made, the calcium complex-forming agent added to this mixture and then the hydrocolloid which precipitates with metal cations is introduced.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the calcium complex-forming agent is a phosphate material.

5. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 4, wherein the phosphate material is selected from alkali metal and ammonium salts of phosphoric acid or polyphosphoric acid.

6. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 5, wherein the phosphate material is sodium polyphosphate ($\text{NaPO}_3)_n$, wherein n [[~]] is about 25.

7. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the amount of calcium complex-forming agent is at least sufficient to form a complex with free calcium ions which are present.

8. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 4, wherein the amount of phosphate material is 0.1 – 1.5% by weight, based on the total of all the constituents of the homogenous mixture.

9. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid which precipitates with metal cations is present in an amount of 0.1 – 10% by weight, based on the total of all the constituents of the homogenous mixture.

10. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 9, wherein the hydrocolloid which precipitates with metal cations is sodium alginate.

11. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the pH of the homogenous mixture of protein, hydrocolloid which precipitates with metal cations, calcium complex-forming agent and water is set to a value in the range from 4 – 7.

12. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein to prepare a product with a meat-type structure starting from milk protein material, the pH is set to a value between 5.0 and 7.0.

13. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein to prepare a product with a fish-type structure starting from milk protein material, the pH is set to a value between 4.5 and 6.0.

14. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1, wherein a finishing material selected from is selected from the group consisting of flavouring, colouring and vegetable or animal fat, vegetable or animal protein, and/or mixtures and a mixture of two or more such materials is added to the homogenous mixture which has been formed.

15-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous product, after it has been formed and isolated, is pasteurized ~~in order to be finished~~.

22. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous product is packaged.

23. (Previously presented) Meat substitute product obtained using the method according to claim 1.

24. (Currently amended) Savoury or sweet snack obtained by processing a fibrous product ~~formed with the aid of~~ obtained by the method according to claim 1.

25. (Original) Ready to consume meat substitute product obtained by culinary processing of a product according to claim 23.

26. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 1, wherein the milk protein material is selected from the group consisting of:

- curd from cheesemaking
- cheese
- powdered milk
- whey protein
- alkali metal, alkaline-earth metal and ammonium caseinate; and combinations thereof.

27. (Currently amended) Method according to claim 5, wherein the phosphate material is selected from the group consisting of disodium hydrogen phosphate, sodium hexametaphosphate and trisodium phosphate; and combinations thereof.